



DERBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

35 Fifth Street
Derby, Connecticut 06418

(203) 736-5027 • fax (203) 736-5031 • www.derbyps.org

Dr. Matthew Conway, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools

Co-Chair Senator McCrory
Co-Chair Representative Currey
Ranking Member Senator Berthel
Ranking Member Representative McCarty

Dear Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty and Honorable Members of the Education Committee:

My name is Matt Coway and I write to you today as Superintendent of Derby Public Schools as well as President of CAPSS and would like to share comments about Raised Bill No. 1094 **AN ACT CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF READING MODELS OR PROGRAMS.**

While we support the extension for full implementation until July 1, 2025, for districts who have not been granted a waiver, we additionally want to share concerns and reiterate that no one curriculum model or program is going to produce different learning outcomes or achievement scores for our kids. This is not an approach that will lead to better outcomes. One of the main tenets of the Science of Reading, and is included in the Science of Reading training provided by CSDE is “One size does NOT fit all”

As a district, our team of amazing teachers, coaches and administrators have embarked on a journey as part of SDE’s Masterclass Pilot program to be trained in the Science of Reading. This has led to researching, analyzing, combing through multiple curriculum models and programs SDE has approved, to select the components that will work best for our kids and realizing no one program does it all. Also realizing many of the techniques we have practiced and developed, in partnership with Literacy How and Hill for Literacy over the past 3 years should not be thrown out in exchange for a commercialized program.

Forcing districts to change course by selecting an entirely new curriculum model or program has the potential to set even more kids back and be disruptive to all classrooms across the state due to the lack of training and support necessary for teachers transitioning to an unfamiliar curriculum

model or program. This will also divert funding that could otherwise be spent on establishing a systematic, ongoing, multi year training and support and coaching program that will have lasting effects for all kids in all classrooms.

We believe a smarter strategy would be to provide an intensely supportive, focused and systematic training program, as well as, a single statewide curriculum model or program that districts may utilize, while receiving model training on the Science of Reading. Mandate the training as opposed to a curriculum model or program. All the materials in the world will not change instruction. You can have the best playbook in the league, but unless your players understand and practice each move with intense focus, you won't make plays and you won't win games. This requires ongoing intensive coaching

We encourage you to ask yourselves, will the original strategy of forcing districts to select a commercialized program will accomplish the below?

- All students should be reading by the end of grade one and independently by the end of grade three
- All teachers must be well-trained in the science of reading and participate in Masterclasses that teach all the components of reading
- A model curriculum developed by the State Department of Education (SDE) that districts may utilize in developing their own or to adopt as a resource.